

REMARKS

Applicants would like to express appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Final Official Action provided. Upon entry of the present paper, claims 1, 8 and 11 will have been amended, and claims 12-13 will have been canceled. Claims 1-11 are pending before the Examiner. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections of the claims pending in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate.

The Examiner has objected to claims 8 and 11 because of a clerical error in these claims. Applicants have corrected these errors and respectfully request withdrawal of this objection.

The Examiner made the following rejections in the outstanding official action:

- 1) Claims 1-2, 4-7 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. WO 97/30531 to LARSSON; and
- 2) Claim 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over LARSSON in view of WECK.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the Examiner's allowance of claims 9-10 and for the indication of the allowability of claims 8 and 12-13. In this regard, solely in order to advance the prosecution of the present application, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to generally incorporate the limitations of allowable dependent claim 12, and have amended independent claim 11 to generally incorporate the limitations of allowable dependent claim 13 (and have canceled claims 12 and 13), which should not be taken as an acquiescence by Applicants as to the propriety of the rejection. Further, Applicants expressly reserve the right to submit claims of a related scope in another application. Thus, the cancellation of the claims in the present application is without prejudice.

With respect to the remaining pending rejected claims, Applicants submit that they are allowable at least due to their dependency from allowable independent claim 1. Further, these

claims further set forth a further combination of elements neither anticipated nor rendered obvious by any of the applied references. It is thus respectfully requested that the Examiner withdraw the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) .

Applicants note that the status of the present application is after final rejection and that once a final rejection has issued, an Applicant does not have a right to amend an application. Nevertheless, in the present situation, Applicants respectfully submit that entry of the present amendment is appropriate and proper and in full compliance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.116. In this regard, Applicants note that the present amendments to claims 1 and 11 have been made to incorporate limitations from claims indicated to be allowable or to otherwise comply with the Examiner's requests, and the present amendment therefore does not raise new issues that would require further consideration or search by the Examiner, but rather places the application into allowable form.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that each and every pending claim of the present application meets the requirements for Patentability at least under 35 U.S.C. § 103, and respectfully requests the Examiner to indicate the allowance of each and every pending claim in the present application.

COMMENTS ON STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR THE INDICATION OF ALLOWABLE
SUBJECT MATTER

In response to the Statement of Reasons for the Indication of Allowable Subject Matter, mailed by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on January 9, 2008, along with the above-noted Official Action, Applicants wish to clarify the record with respect to the basis for patentability of the allowable claim in the present application. In this regard, while Applicants do not disagree with the Examiner's indications that certain identified features are not disclosed by the prior art references, as noted by the Examiner, Applicants further wish to clarify that the independent claims in the present application recite a particular combination of features, and the basis for patentability of each of these claims is further based on the particular totality of the features recited therein. The dependent claims set forth additional bases for their patentability in accordance with their recited limitations as well as in accordance with the particular limitations of the respective base claims.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In view of the fact that none of the art of record, whether considered alone, or in any proper combination thereof, discloses or suggests the present invention, reconsideration of the Examiner's action and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested and are believed to be appropriate.

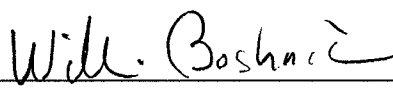
Applicants note that this amendment is being made to advance prosecution of the application to allowance, and should not be considered as surrendering equivalents of the territory between the claims prior to the present amendment and the amended claims. Further, no acquiescence as to the propriety of the Examiner's rejection is made by the present amendment. All other amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should there be any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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